HILLSIDE DITCH

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service – Practice Code 423

HILLSIDE DITCH

A hillside ditch is a channel that has a supporting ridge on the lower side, constructed across the slope at defined gradient and horizontal or vertical interval, with or without a vegetative barrier.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

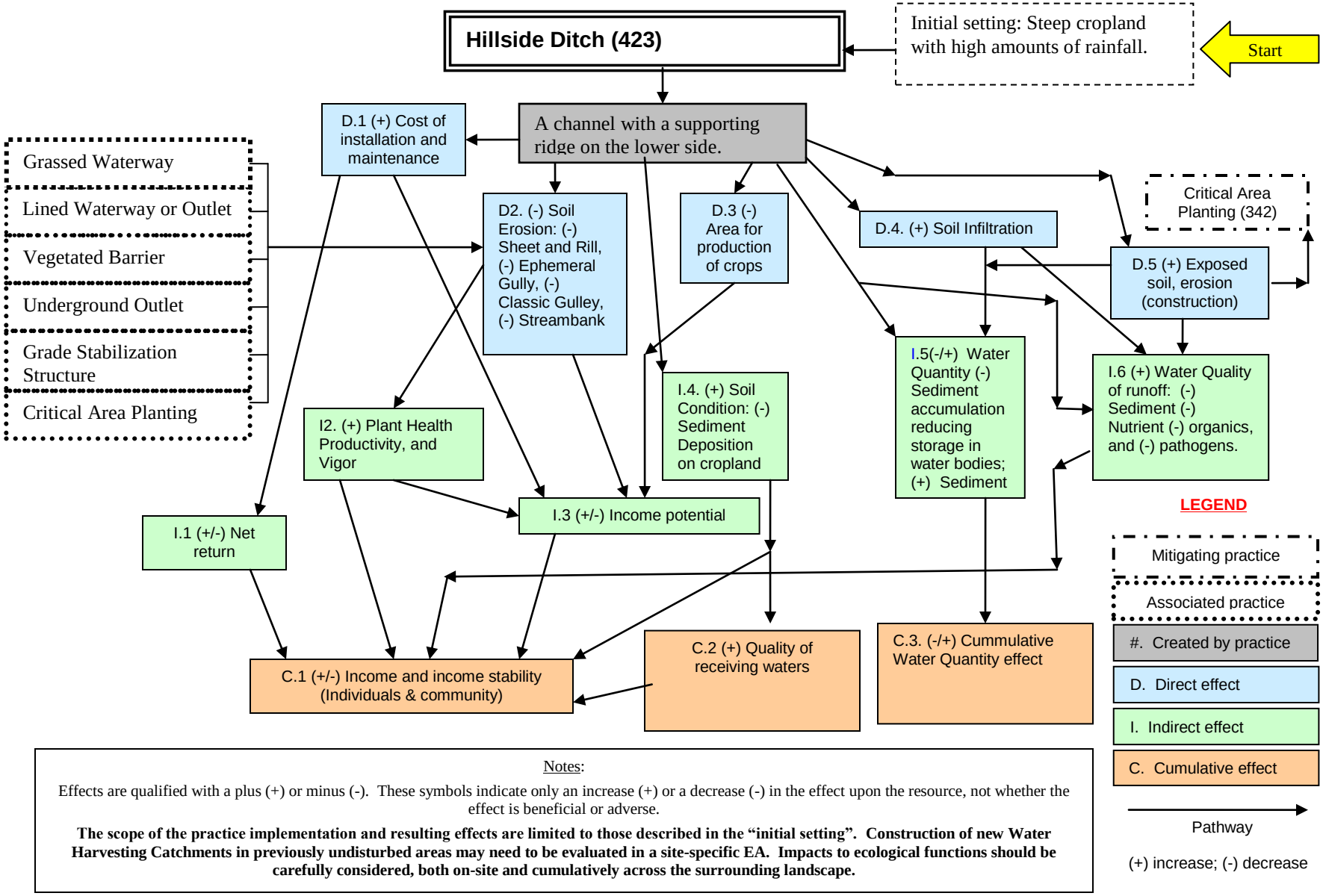
A hillside ditch will safely control the flow of water by diverting runoff from upland sloping areas to a stable outlet. This practice applies to steeply sloping sites where surface flow is damaging sloping upland, and there is sufficient soil depth for constructing a hillside ditch system. Hillside ditches shall not be used to provide protection to buildings, roads, or other improvements. A hillside ditch is used to help control erosion on steep cropland by diverting runoff to a protected outlet. The hillside ditches are installed at designed vertical intervals down the slope and at nonerosive grades within the channels.

Adequate outlets for runoff water are required before installing the hillside ditches. The outlets may be constructed waterways or natural waterways that have a protective cover of grass. Other disposal areas such as well-established pasture would be acceptable. A hillside ditch will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

A Hillside Ditch (423) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Grassed Waterway (412), Lined Waterway or Outlet (468), Underground Outlet (620), Grade Stabilization Structure (410), Vegetative Barrier (601), and Critical Area Planting (342). For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.

The following page identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowners and are presumed to have been obtained. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.



Notes:

Effects are qualified with a plus (+) or minus (-). These symbols indicate only an increase (+) or a decrease (-) in the effect upon the resource, not whether the effect is beneficial or adverse.

The scope of the practice implementation and resulting effects are limited to those described in the "initial setting". Construction of new Water Harvesting Catchments in previously undisturbed areas may need to be evaluated in a site-specific EA. Impacts to ecological functions should be carefully considered, both on-site and cumulatively across the surrounding landscape.

The diagram above identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied according to NRCS practice standards and specifications. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowners and are presumed to have been obtained. All income changes are partially dependent upon market fluctuations which are independent of the conservation practices. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.